

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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STEEL SHOT REGULATIONS FOR WATERFOWL HUNTING AFFECT PORTIONS OF 27 STATES IN 1980

Portions of 27 States in all four migratory waterfowl flyways have been designated "steel shot zones" for the 1980-81 waterfowl hunting season, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The zones, where steel shot ammunition will be required for waterfowl hunting next fall, were published in the June 5, 1980, Federal Register.

The purpose of requiring waterfowl hunters to use steel shot is to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning in waterfowl. About 2 million waterfowl die of lead poisoning annually in the United States after eating spent lead shot which the birds mistake for seeds or grit. Steel shot is not toxic to waterfowl.

The steel shot zones are selected on the basis of the amount of lead shot found in the digestive tracts of waterfowl. The Fish and Wildlife Service and the States have conducted extensive studies over the last several years to identify these areas.

Detailed descriptions of the zones for 1980 will be made in announcements to be issued by the Service's six regional offices. The States in which the zones occur are:

Atlantic Flyway - Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Mississippi Flyway - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

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Central Flyway - Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas.

Pacific Flyway - Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

About 20 percent of the waterfowl harvest of the United States occurs within the zones that have been identified for the next waterfowl hunting season.

In some States, nontoxic shot zones are identified by State regulations only. In addition, many national wildlife refuges require nontoxic shot for waterfowl hunting. Hunters are advised to check State and refuge regulations for other areas where nontoxic shot is required.

In 1980, steel shot will be manufactured in 10, 12, and 20 gauge. Steel shotshell loads will be required without exception in the nontoxic shot zones in 1980. Exceptions based on gauge of shotshell being used are no longer applicable after August 30, 1980.

In 1978 and 1979, Congress passed legislation prohibiting the Interior Department from enforcing steel shot regulations in any State unless the State wildlife agency approved. Seven States did not approve enforcement of the regulations in part or all of the designated areas in 1979. This provision will expire September 30, 1980, unless it is extended by Congressional action.

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